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Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an account of efforts made at the national, regional and international levels towards implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The report includes information about recent initiatives to promote the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy in the development plans of small island developing States; efforts to mobilize resources for more effective support of regional and national programming in small island developing States; measures being undertaken by relevant agencies of the United Nations system; and activities being implemented by the wider international community, including civil society, in support of small island developing States.

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** The submission of the report was delayed owing to the need to incorporate input from various organizations of the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 61/196, the General Assembly welcomed the renewed commitment of the international community to support the development of small island developing States, and urged stakeholders to take timely action for the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Mauritius Declaration[1] and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation,[2] including the further development and operationalization of specific projects and programmes. The Assembly encouraged the implementation of partnership initiatives, within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States, reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to strengthen the small island developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and called for the provision of new and additional voluntary resources for the revitalization of the Small Island Developing States Information Network.[3] The Assembly also requested relevant United Nations agencies, within their respective mandates, to mainstream the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation in their work programmes.

2. The present report describes progress made towards furthering implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation in response to the mandate set out in resolution 61/196. The relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, as well as regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, civil society and the Governments of States Members of the United Nations, were consulted in its preparation.

II. Action to further the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy

A. Thematic review conducted by the Commission on Sustainable Development

3. In pursuance of the mandate set out in General Assembly resolution 61/196, the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development devoted half a day to exploring policy options and initiatives to effectively address the challenges faced by small island developing States in respect of the thematic areas under review by the Commission: energy for sustainable development; industrial development; air pollution and the atmosphere; and climate change.

4. A panel of three experts on small island developing States led interactive discussions on strategies for adapting to climate change and mitigating the problems associated with it using a regional approach; recommendations to improve the security of small island developing States and their access to appropriate energy

[1] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] See http://www.sidsnet.org.

supplies; and proposals for new technologies to help small island developing States to adapt to climate change and to achieve sustainable development. A number of innovative projects and policy options were highlighted. The Marshall Islands gave a presentation on the use of tidal energy to regenerate coral reefs, and thereby restore beaches and fish nurseries in coastal waters, and the Pacific Gender and Energy Network showcased an outreach initiative for rural and remote communities designed to facilitate women's access to affordable energy.

5. Small island developing States participated actively in the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, underscoring the priority attention that they accorded the thematic cluster. Their contribution to the debate included calls for more comprehensive and integrated energy policies and increased financing for exploring renewable energy solutions, with a special focus on wind, geothermal sources, biomass, solar energy and tidal flows. They highlighted the desirability of making renewable energy innovations more widely available through South-South cooperation, with the support of the international community as a whole. They stressed the importance of devoting greater attention to the development of off-grid renewable energy innovations, particularly for multi-island archipelagic States such as those in the Pacific. The Pacific countries also pointed out the extremely high cost of having fossil fuel delivered to their remote islands, owing to the significant transportation charges. They encouraged consideration of bulk-purchasing agreements for fossil fuels with a view to lowering costs.

6. Support was expressed for public-private partnerships, technical cooperation and capacity-building to spur industrial development. Policies focusing on, inter alia, the use of marine resources, aquaculture industries and seafood processing were encouraged. The small island developing States highlighted the need for increased financial and technological support for mitigation and adaptation measures, suggesting for possible inclusion in climate change adaptation policies such innovations as small-scale natural-resource restoration. Emphasis was also placed on the need for greater attention to be focused on disaster preparedness, mitigation and management within the context of integrated adaptation strategies, considering the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and natural disasters and their significant negative impact on the sustainable development of small island developing States.

7. In keeping with the thematic focus of the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the *Natural Resources Forum*, a quarterly journal issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, featured a special section on small island developing States in its May 2007 issue.[4] Entitled "Climate change and renewable energy: focus on small island developing States", the issue included articles on greenhouse gas reduction commitments, biodiversity, fisheries development and biofuels in the light of the vulnerability of small island developing States to climate change and their dependence on imported fossil fuels.

[4] *Natural Resources Forum, A United Nations Sustainable Development Journal*, vol. 31, Issue 2.

B. Mainstreaming the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation

8. In pursuit of the effective implementation of the General Assembly mandate to ensure mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation at the national and regional levels, as well as within the relevant programmes of the United Nations system,[5] The Department of Economic and Social Affairs convened, in New York in April 2007, an expert group meeting to consider a comprehensive framework for the mainstreaming and monitoring of Mauritius Strategy implementation. The meeting, which was attended by governmental experts from small island developing States and representatives from the United Nations system, regional intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations from small island developing States, sought to determine the main challenges encountered in the process of implementing the Mauritius Strategy with a view to identifying a common framework and approach to facilitate the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

9. Participants addressed questions relating to the level of awareness and understanding of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation on the part of Government officials; the degree of assimilation of the Strategy by national planners and development administrators; the compatibility of the Strategy with existing development frameworks already in the process of implementation; and the level of engagement with the donor community using the Strategy framework. Attention was focused on the need to foster Government ownership of the process of implementation and to ensure that United Nations system delivery of development support at the national level is well coordinated and promotes effective assimilation of United Nations assistance at the country level.

10. The absence of an integrated framework for monitoring all of the mandates of the many development platforms at the national level was identified as one of the issues to be addressed in the establishment of a framework for mainstreaming and monitoring implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The need for donor support for the integration of the Strategy at the national level was also underscored. The continuing perception that the Mauritius Strategy was a framework for action within the environment sector alone was identified as a further challenge to effective mainstreaming. The uneven capacity of countries to generate appropriate data was highlighted as a critical area for institutional strengthening and capacity-building, with a view to achieving effective monitoring of Mauritius Strategy implementation. Member States also identified the need for communications strategies to promote awareness and understanding of the Mauritius Strategy by both government and civil society.

11. Support by regional technical and intergovernmental organizations was affirmed as being invaluable in enhancing the national capacities of small island developing States to ensure comprehensive implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Attention was also focused in the small island developing States that are facing graduation from least developed country status, taking into account the fact that the graduation process is likely to have a substantial impact on local efforts to mainstream the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

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[5] See resolution 61/196.

12. National sustainable development strategies were viewed positively as an appropriate existing framework within which to incorporate the Mauritius Strategy mandate, given the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions in the design of its comprehensive development policy and strategy. In this regard, the ongoing project of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, supported by Italy, to assist the small island developing States of the Pacific region in the preparation of national sustainable development strategies was highlighted as an important initiative that was worthy of replication in other regions.

13. The meeting was welcomed as a valuable stocktaking exercise that would facilitate progress towards the more effective implementation and mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy. It was therefore agreed that arrangements should be made for follow-up action.

C. Secretariat support

14. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Small Island Developing States Unit, continues to facilitate the coordination of system-wide implementation of the small island developing States agenda through the mechanism of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States and to provide substantive support and advisory services to such States with a view to advancing the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. In this regard, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is implementing a demonstration programme in Timor-Leste to promote sustainable access to freshwater and energy services and overseeing a project, funded by Italy, to improve water-resource management and the development of a water supply system in Tuvalu.

15. The Small Island Developing States Information Network remains a vital tool for facilitating communication among stakeholders in small island developing States on issues regarding implementation of the sustainable development agenda. The Information Network provides opportunities for regular contact among the widely dispersed small island developing States, strengthening interregional exchange of information, building capacity at the national level by educating stakeholders and mobilizing experts on small island developing States, assisting with research and data collection and disseminating information that is important for advocacy. During the past year, significant preparatory work has been undertaken with a view to pursuing the dynamic redesign and expansion of the website. Once the work has been completed, the Information Network will better respond to the critical development needs of small island developing States.

D. United Nations system collaboration and response

16. Working together with the regional commissions (see section E below), the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system continued their active support of Mauritius Strategy implementation, including through participation in the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States.

17. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that it had made focused efforts to mainstream the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation in its activities and work programmes. UNESCO

implemented a range of projects in the small island developing States regions. The Youth Poverty Alleviation through Tourism and Heritage (PATH) initiative, which involves young people in community tourism and the preservation of culture and natural heritage sites, now has projects under way in eight small island developing States in the Caribbean. Through its Youth Visioning for Island Living partnership with the Lighthouse Foundation, UNESCO initiated several new projects in the Pacific region.

18. UNESCO continued its support for the Caribbean Indigenous and Endangered Languages portal in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, promoting the preservation of more than 20 indigenous languages in the region. In the past year, several conferences and workshops were held on such themes as creative industries, cultural heritage and collective rights, and the two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade was commemorated. Support for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage was provided for projects in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Tonga and Vanuatu. Projects under the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems programme included a study relating to women's knowledge of nature, medicinal plants and traditional medicine in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Réunion. In April 2007, UNESCO also convened an interregional workshop in Seychelles on cultural diversity in islands.

19. Considerable progress has been made by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission towards putting in place an Indian Ocean tsunami warning and mitigation System. A network of national tsunami information centres has been established and improvements made in seismographic networks and deep-seabed sensors. UNESCO also organized world heritage national strategy workshops and natural resource-management workshops throughout the Caribbean and the Pacific regions. A Caribbean capacity-building programme was inaugurated in Cuba in March 2007 and new biosphere reserves have been established in the Federated States of Micronesia and in Palau.

20. New projects were launched by UNESCO in the context of its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), which promotes media development in small island developing States. In March 2007, IPDC approved 13 national projects in 11 small island developing States, including Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean; Cape Verde and Mauritius in the region of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas; and Fiji, Niue and Palau in the Pacific. A new five-year project (2006-2010) was launched on education-based capacity-building for sustainable development in the Pacific. UNESCO also supports the process leading to the establishment of the University Consortium of Small Island States through a cooperative programme with the University of the West Indies. Support for small island developing States in respect of HIV/AIDS is also ongoing. A framework has been developed jointly with the International Labour Organization for treating the pandemic as a workplace issue in Caribbean educational institutions.

21. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provides policy and technical support to small island developing States. It has also set up a Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety, which, with contributions from the Government of Italy, has provided $9.5 million to support regional programmes for food security in the Pacific and the Caribbean.

22. At its Eighth Ordinary Meeting, in 2006, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity formally adopted a programme of work on island biodiversity. The programme of work addresses, in an integral manner, focal areas, including the protection and maintenance of the components of biodiversity to support human well-being; the protection of traditional knowledge and practices; and efforts to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits generated by the use of biological resources. In preparation for consideration by the Conference of the Parties of the programme of work, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity published a brochure entitled "The wealth of islands: a global call for conservation".

23. The secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity also organized a workshop on the ecosystem approach and customary practice in protected areas in small islands, with a view to building capacity, developing guidelines and sharing lessons learned. The Micronesia Challenge initiative, which has as its objective a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss in the Pacific subregion of Micronesia by 2010, was launched during the Eighth Ordinary Meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The secretariat also worked with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to incorporate elements of the programme of work into the agendas of organizations involved in implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in small island developing States. The secretariat has developed a web portal on island biodiversity and an islands database and has been instrumental in organizing the Global Island Partnership.

24. The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States strengthened its advocacy for small island developing States through the publication and distribution of information pamphlets and a newsletter aimed at mobilizing support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Office of the High Representative also organized two special events in the fall of 2006. The first, which addressed strategies to maximize economic benefits and strengthen resilience in small island developing States through sustainable tourism, was convened in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Tourism Organization. The second, a presentation by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided information on how small island developing States can benefit from the Central Emergency Response Fund. The Office of the High Representative continued to promote the Pacific Connectivity project, holding a special event in March 2007. It also invited the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to present a progress report on the status of implementation by small island developing States of the Hyogo Framework for Action and organized, in May 2007, an event on climate change, small island developing States and least developed countries, which featured a presentation by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

25. The World Bank organized an event to launch its Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, which became operational on 1 June 2007. That innovative Facility — the first of its kind — will provide participating Governments from the region with immediate access to liquidity if they are affected by a hurricane or an earthquake. Its reserves come from participating countries and donors. The Facility also secured $110 million worth of claims-paying capacity on the international

reinsurance and capital markets. The Facility will serve as a pilot programme for possible replication in other small island developing States regions. The small island developing States of the Pacific have already indicated strong interest.

26. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) continued its efforts to address issues of trade and globalization in small island developing States. The major activities of UNCTAD involve research and analysis, policy advice and technical assistance on smooth transition strategies for those small island developing States that the Committee for Development Policy recommended for graduation in 2006. Direct assistance has been provided to Vanuatu and will be extended to Kiribati and Tuvalu in the context of the pre-eligibility of those countries for graduation.[6]

27. UNCTAD also worked to highlight the economic vulnerability of small island developing States, jointly organizing a forum with the Indian Ocean Commission on the question of special treatment in the spheres of development financing and multilateral trading. The forum concluded that the only area of action in which international support might be provided to countries because of their status as small island developing States was that of "aid for trade" — a forward-looking approach to international cooperation supported by both donors to and trading partners of vulnerable developing countries.

28. The World Tourism Organization continued to support small island developing States in their efforts to integrate sustainable tourism development plans into national development strategies; to enhance community-based initiatives and capacity-building in sustainable tourism while protecting cultural, traditional and natural resources; to promote balance between the development of tourism and that of other economic sectors; and to support monitoring, assessment and the development of early-warning systems. The World Tourism Organization held a conference in the Bahamas during 2006 on building resilience in the tourism sector in small island developing States while maximizing economic benefits through sustainable tourism development. The organization also initiated a series of pilot projects to assist in the development and demonstration of climate change adaptation policies for beaches and other coastal ecosystems. Proposals to reduce the vulnerability to climate change of the tourism sector in Fiji and Maldives have already been approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

29. The World Tourism Organization will convene two meetings, in October and November 2007, bringing together governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to address the challenges to tourism development presented by climate change. Both meetings will focus special attention on the impact of climate change on the tourism sector of small islands.

30. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) reported that it had recently appointed a focal point for small island developing States. The Governing Council of UN-Habitat, by its resolution 20/9, pursued activities in support of small island developing States in the areas of disaster preparedness, land

[6] Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu met graduation criteria for the first time in the 2006 review of the list of the least developed countries and, accordingly, are regarded as pre-qualifying for graduation. If they meet the same graduation criteria again in the 2009 review of the list, they will be recommended for graduation in 2013, unless the Committee for Development Policy finds compelling reasons for recommending a postponement of the question of graduation.

registration, urban planning guidelines, hurricane-resistant housing and the development of a training programme for local authorities and community development groups on the administration and sustainable development of cities and other human settlements.

31. UN-Habitat continued its efforts towards mainstreaming the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. In collaboration with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, it held a training programme for locally elected leaders in the Pacific islands. Some 30 trainers from eight Pacific island States benefited from a train-the-trainers programme to promote sustainability in capacity-building. Implementation by UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) of the $23.5 million Shelter Response and Recovery Programme for Maldives — part of the overall tsunami response — is ongoing.

32. The International Waters Programme, financed by UNDP and GEF, which linked integrated coastal waters resources management with marine fisheries issues, including support for community-based natural-resource management initiatives in small island developing States in the Pacific, was successfully concluded early in 2007. UNDP and GEF also support the Pacific Islands Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC) project, which is aimed at implementing measures facilitating climate change adaptation in 11 Pacific islands, building their resilience in the key sectors of water, agriculture and food security and coastal infrastructure. Mainstreaming adaptation into national plans and processes is a key objective of PACC, the first GEF project in small island developing States in the Pacific region to draw on the Special Climate Change Fund. It will support the implementation of national priorities as set out in national communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in national adaptation programmes of action for the least developed countries and in the Pacific Islands Framework on Climate Change 2006-2015.

33. GEF also approved a $100 million grant package for 15 small island developing States in the Pacific through an agreement reached in May 2007. Those funds, to be disbursed over a three-year period, will serve as seed money to support programmes allowing those Member States to focus their strategies on priority issues relating to the environment and to establish a framework for the more effective monitoring of progress. Attention will be focused on the implementation of a range of adaptation and conservation measures in response to climate change aimed at preserving the biodiversity and protecting the fragile ecosystems of those countries. In addition to assistance for national initiatives, the grant will also benefit regional and subregional projects, including the Micronesia Challenge.

34. UNDP is currently implementing, with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a project aimed at integrating watershed and coastal area management in small island developing States in the Caribbean. The project is assisting 13 such States in strengthening their capacity to plan and sustainably manage their marine resources and ecosystems through improvements in integrated freshwater basin and coastal area management and integrated water resource management. UNDP is also supporting efforts by small island developing States in the Caribbean to strengthen national capacities for integrating into their national development plans strategies to combat land degradation. Within the framework of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities, nine demonstration projects targeting specific threats,

including projects relating to groundwater protection, industrial waste management and sewage treatment, are also being implemented.

35. UNEP continued to support the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre in Belize and assisted Niue and Palau with their first and second national communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In the Pacific, UNEP completed pre-feasibility studies for waste-management pilot projects for several islands, including Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu, and offered training courses and workshops on animal waste management and land-based pollution. UNEP also continued to rehabilitate select marine and coastal areas in Jamaica and to foster dialogue on marine and coastal management in the Pacific through the Coral Reef Initiative. In the area of freshwater management, UNEP developed a rainwater harvesting programme for the Caribbean and provided technical assistance for waste/water projects and planning. UNEP also assists small island developing States in the Pacific and the Caribbean in redressing land degradation. A similar project has been developed for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas region.

36. UNEP continues to support a sustainable tourism awareness programme in the Caribbean, offering technical assistance in connection with the use of ozone-friendly technologies in the tourism sector. Small island developing States have received the support of UNEP in building their capacities to fulfil their obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Technical assistance has also been provided to the Caribbean subregion for the preparation of a Caribbean biosafety framework. Funding is currently being sought in connection with a joint proposal by UNEP and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre to establish an islands biodiversity database and a world atlas of island conservation.

37. UNEP supported the implementation of a regional education framework for the Pacific, which focuses on, inter alia, curriculum development, strengthened civil society and the development of a regional leadership programme on sustainable development issues for small island developing States in the Pacific. A Pacific Youth and Environment Network meeting was held in Samoa in April 2007 with a view to preparing a youth version of the Pacific state of the environment report and a youth message to the meeting of environment ministers of the Pacific region, scheduled to take place in September 2007. A similar initiative was undertaken in the Caribbean, resulting in a *Global Environment Outlook* for youth in the region.

38. UNEP also conducted capacity-building and training programmes to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of multilateral environmental agreements in various small island developing States. In the area of trade, UNEP supported Jamaica, Mauritius and Papua New Guinea in assessing the impact of trade policies on agriculture and biodiversity, and it is currently seeking funds to inaugurate an annual training session on trade and the environment in the Caribbean.

E. National and regional action

39. The Pacific Islands Forum provides leadership among the network of regional organizations that support the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by small island developing States in the Pacific region. Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy is implicit in the Pacific Plan — the comprehensive framework for national

and regional development approved by the States members of the Pacific Islands Forum in 2005, which focuses on economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and security in the region. The secretariat of the Pacific Islands Forum, which monitors the ongoing implementation of the Plan, has noted persistent capacity constraints as the principal obstacles to effective implementation.

40. The Pacific Plan framework for the promotion of economic growth focuses attention on expanding trade, improving infrastructure and increasing private-sector participation. With a view to improving labour mobility in the region, New Zealand introduced a recognized seasonal employer scheme, which became operational on 30 April 2007 and will facilitate the recruitment of offshore workers for employment in specific industries, including horticulture. A number of Pacific island States, including Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, have already signed agreements to participate in the scheme. Support for fisheries management is ongoing. Assistance has also been provided for the development of national tourism strategies, including the upgrading of national tourism office websites in several member States, including Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. Also of note is the elaboration of a human resource development web-based training toolkit for capacity-building in small and medium enterprises.

41. The Pacific Islands Forum has reported that progress has been made towards the establishment of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office and towards securing the instruments of ratification required to bring the Pacific Islands Air Services Agreement into effect. As regards information and communications technology, work has progressed on many fronts, including with regard to an assessment of the "e-readiness" of Pacific island countries; the promotion of Government use of information and communications technology; bridging the communications divide with rural and remote areas through a low-cost satellite initiative; and the "one laptop per child" initiative. Progress has also been made in education, particularly towards strengthening standards and establishing a regional qualification framework. Of particular note is the creation, with support from Australia, of the Australia-Pacific Technical College, which will begin student enrolment in the second half of 2007.

42. Issues of governance are identified as being among the more complex and sensitive concerns of small island developing States in the Pacific, particularly with respect to land ownership and the alignment of modern and traditional systems of governance. In the area of land management, 10 studies have been commissioned to identify ways to strengthen land-tenure systems. Attention has also been accorded to the strengthening of data collection and statistical information systems, with a view to addressing the region's weak statistical capacity.

43. The Pacific Islands Forum identified the challenge of gathering data as an ongoing concern, since it is integral to the effective monitoring and support of Pacific Plan initiatives, particularly with regard to country-level reporting. A chronic lack of human, technical and financial capacity among all stakeholders in member States also presents a fundamental challenge to effective implementation. In this regard, there is a critical need to increase capacity at the national level for legal, legislative and regulatory initiatives.

44. The Pacific Operations Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) contributed to the development of several sustainable development frameworks, including the United Nations Development Action

Framework and the Pacific Plan. The Commission provided capacity-building services to small island developing States in the Pacific through several workshops and expert group meetings on issues including urbanization, statistics collection and management, national capacity-building and international trade and agreements. ESCAP also launched, in Fiji, the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2007*, and conducted studies relating to electrification schemes and the technical and commercial viability of communications technologies in the region.

45. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) continues to play an integral role in mobilizing regional support for implementation by small island developing States in the Caribbean of the Mauritius Strategy. Caribbean member States mandated that the ECLAC Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee will serve as the intergovernmental forum for guiding and overseeing progress in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and that ECLAC will serve as the secretariat for the regional coordinating mechanism, which has yet to be formally established.

46. With a view to identifying the specific challenges to implementation of the Mauritius Strategy being experienced by its associate and member States, in 2006 ECLAC conducted a survey among small island developing States in the Caribbean. The responses indicated that public awareness of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation was not as widespread as it should be and that the small island developing States were still finding it difficult to obtain financial and technical resources to support the implementation of the Strategy. The need for institutional strengthening also remained a continuing concern. Those ongoing institutional capacity needs expressed by member States underscored the importance of ensuring that the regional coordinating mechanism for Mauritius Strategy implementation, once formally institutionalized, becomes operational at the earliest possible date.

47. ECLAC continued to provide research, technical and advisory services to its member States, and it remains actively involved in the Caribbean Sea Initiative — the Caribbean-led movement to seek international recognition for the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, which has served to develop a framework for cooperation for the more effective management of the Caribbean Sea. As regards disaster assessments, ECLAC, in collaboration with relevant regional organizations, including the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency and the secretariat of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, convened a meeting early in 2007 to consider methodologies for disaster assessments with a view to optimizing their use.

48. The Indian Ocean Commission has continued to serve as the regional mechanism ad interim to assist small island developing States in the region of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The ongoing regional work programme 2006-2008 identifies as priority areas for action the management of HIV/AIDS; disaster preparedness, mitigation and response; the harvesting of freshwater resources and the management of wastewater; the promotion of food security; ocean and coastal-zone management; the implementation of adaptation measures to address climate change and sea-level rise; and trade.

49. The Indian Ocean Commission has been working to mobilize resources to support the implementation of that programme, while facilitating more effective networking between the States of the region of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean,

Mediterranean and South China Seas and existing United Nations programmes, including UNEP, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, FAO and UNDP. An assessment of disaster preparedness in Indian Ocean countries was undertaken, with Commonwealth Secretariat support, with a view to shaping a regional strategy within the Hyogo Framework for Action. Attention was also focused on the preparation of a regional report on climate change for 2007 and the convening of a forum on trade and small island developing States. The Commission found that it was a challenge to provide effective technical assistance for small island developing States except in certain areas and except on a limited scale. Greater political and financial support was judged necessary in order to strengthen the Commission's ability to promote meaningful implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation in the region.

50. In Mauritius, ongoing programmes and projects in the area of climate change include a national programme of implementation, a multisectoral committee for climate change and the preparation of an initial national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. A climate change action plan, a technology needs assessment and a stocktaking and stakeholder's consultation have all been completed. The Government is working to implement wind- and solar-energy projects with a view to making further progress in energy-development efforts, a number of programmes have been implemented, including the commissioning of additional power plants and projects relating to the increased production, efficiency and reliability of energy and the enhanced exploitation of renewable energy sources, including wind and bagasse. A national energy-saving campaign for domestic customers, and a campaign targeting students, have increased public awareness of the need to conserve energy. Significant attention is also being devoted to retrofitting in the sugar industry with the goal of generating electricity and producing ethanol and value added spirits.

51. Disaster-mitigation efforts include the fine-tuning of a warning system for cyclones and the preparation of a comprehensive national strategy for disaster-risk reduction. Within the framework of its national solid waste management programme, Mauritius is implementing a system based on the reduction, improved collection and recycling of waste, while undertaking new construction and modernizing existing facilities. As regards fisheries and coastal resources, Mauritius has established a Fishermen Investment Trust that targets artisanal fishermen, bank fishermen and former sand miners with a view to enhancing their capacity to manage entitlements and to diversify operations. Mauritius is also implementing plans to expand its aquaculture industry, and is seeking to better regulate fishing activities and to improve the monitoring of its coral reefs and marine protected areas. The Water Resources Unit has prepared an integrated plan entitled Vision 2040, which includes initiatives to increase storage capacity; reduce losses in distribution systems; increase treatment capacity for potable water; enhance hydrographic surveys and dam-safety analysis for major reservoirs; rehabilitate dams; put in place more efficient irrigation methods; ensure the sustainable harvesting of groundwater; improve sewerage systems; and make greater use of treated wastewater for irrigation.

52. In 2006, Mauritius passed the Plant Protection Act, updated its list of quarantine pests, drafted a plant breeder's right bill to address such issues as access to and use of genetic material, created a national biosafety committee and initiated implementation of a biosafety framework. A revision of its forest policy in 2006

addressed, in an integral manner, sustainable forest management, conservation and green tourism. A proposed knowledge hub will increase capacity-building and promote formal job training, while a national strategic plan in the area of information and communications technology will create a "cyber island" and provide training for professionals in that field.

F. International support

53. The Government of the United States of America, through its Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), continued to support the efforts of small island developing States to address waste management, disaster preparedness and the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources. Some $4.6 million has been designated to support the preservation of cultural heritage sites and treasures through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. The United States also uses the Millennium Challenge Corporation and the United States Trade and Development Agency to fund and support projects to improve transportation to social services, local markets, ports and airports, as well as for improvements in telecommunications in various countries, including Cape Verde and Vanuatu. The United States has also provided assistance to the small island developing States in the Pacific for addressing HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

54. Over the past year, the United States Government has offered approximately $1 million in support of good governance projects in the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and Sao Tome and Principe. USAID also collaborates with small island developing States in building capacity for sustainable development by promoting standards-based education, improved fiscal management and other reforms.

55. The Government of Japan has supported the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the Caribbean through projects addressing waste management, sustainable production, the promotion of clean energy, tourism development and wetlands carbon sequestration. Japan has formed a partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency to undertake disaster-preparedness initiatives, and has continued to support the recovery of Grenada and Jamaica in the wake of Hurricane Ivan through a number of reconstruction projects. In 2007, Japan also initiated fisheries development projects in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, in addition to continuing its support for the Caribbean Fisheries Training and Development Institute.

56. Japan remains particularly active in the small island developing States in the Pacific region. Japan hosted group training courses on various aspects of trade and economic development and has directly funded physical and telecommunications infrastructure improvement projects throughout the region. The Government has offered training in fisheries management and sustainable aquaculture techniques, and supports sustainable tourism development through capacity-building in many Pacific Member States. Japan has also provided assistance in a number of critical areas, including waste management, watershed protection, forestry research, climate change, coral reef protection and environmental education. Support for projects and training is also provided to boost immunization programmes, nutrition and health in the region. Japanese support for security in the Pacific includes training in the areas

of disaster mitigation and management and organized crime. Resources have also been designated for culture and language preservation and education.

57. In 2007, the Government of Denmark extended for one year its support for the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission for implementation of the Pacific Islands Energy Policies and Strategic Action Planning Project. Since 2004, Denmark has contributed $1.9 million to that project, which seeks to improve the capacity of 14 small island developing States in the Pacific region to develop and implement national energy policies.

III. Conclusion

58. **Attention will be given in the coming year to increasing awareness among all stakeholders of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation as a comprehensive sustainable development strategy for small island developing States; to enhancing national capacity for more effective assimilation and mainstreaming of the Strategy; to strengthening regional organizations and mechanisms with a view to improving their support for national efforts; and to promoting, within the agencies of the United Nations system and the donor community, more appropriate responses and focused support for the advancement of the sustainable development agenda of small island developing States.**

59. **Work on the design of a framework for mainstreaming and monitoring the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation will continue, with a view to promoting its coordinated implementation within existing development strategies and plans, including the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in small island developing States will be ongoing in the Pacific, and the possibility of pursuing similar projects in other regions will be actively explored.**

60. **Consideration should also be given, within the framework for mainstreaming the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, to improving coherence in the delivery of assistance to small island developing States from the United Nations system and the donor community. Particular attention will be given to the capacity challenges that small island developing States continue to face in their efforts to implement the Mauritius Strategy.**